

Detroit Excellence

A Quarterly Newsletter for Employees, Volunteers and Patients of the Detroit VA Healthcare System



**VA
HEALTH
CARE**

Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

January/February/March 2014

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vhadetpublicaffairs@va.gov

Detroit VA Healthcare System Hiring Fair: Hundreds of Vets Visit for Jobs, Skills and Health Care

Halls in the Detroit VA Healthcare System were packed, and there was plenty of activity on Saturday March 1, 2014, as medical center staff, Wayne County Veterans Services, the State of Michigan and Hiring Our Heroes, among others, held a one-of-a-kind hiring event on-site.



"Welcome Home 2014: A Hiring Fair for Veterans" was successful by all accounts! More than 400 Veterans participated in the event, with more than 70 employers available on-site for consultation and interviews.

Along with linking employers to job seekers, the medical center was able to provide medical exams to more than 10 people, and the HBA was able to serve 28 Veterans.

Workshops were held throughout the facility, on everything from resume writing, to interview skills, to dressing properly for an interview. Several employers mentioned that they had the chance to set up multiple interviews with various candidates for the following week. And, several Veterans were delighted to actually interview on-site, and receive job offers!

"What an amazing day," said one Veteran we spoke to. "I can't thank the Detroit VA enough for providing this walk-in-and-get-a-job opportunity for those of us who really need the help."

"This was a collaborative effort between the VA and our community partners," said Dr. Pamela Reeves, Director, Detroit VA Healthcare System. "Not only is it important for us to assist Veterans in understanding their benefits when it comes to health care, but we also want to help them realize what is available to them as far as jobs. So often, these highly qualified individuals leave the military and it's a challenge for them to apply their incredible skills in the civilian world. That's where we can help."

You can see more photos from this event on page 7!



Message from the Director



I think it goes without saying, this has been a remarkable 2nd quarter here at the Detroit VA Healthcare System!

The weather we experienced in Southeast Michigan was certainly something many of us haven't seen in a long time, but it also challenged our team to become quite innovative. For a dozen days, we opened a Warming Center in our Multi-Purpose Room, to serve Veterans who truly needed our assistance. I must thank our team, and donors, who came through with food, blankets, hats and gloves for Veterans. We were able to serve just under 500 Veterans, which is remarkable.

As far as recognizing needs, our leadership team was thrilled at the turnout for our first-ever on-site job fair and welcome home event (details are on page 1). Hundreds of Veterans filled our hallways and took part in great seminars, along with speaking to potential employers. By all accounts, this event was an incredible success. For those of you who attended, I hope you agree!

There were many recognitions and accomplishments this quarter, and a few I'd like to mention. Twenty-seven of our PACT teams achieved National Recognition of Silver and Gold from VA. This is phenomenal as we continue to focus on patient-centered care. Also, our medical center has been recognized nationally for its strong practice in instituting a team-based approach to General Mental Health care nearly two years before it was mandated by the VA in Washington. On page 10, you'll see that some of our doctors were recognized by a national organization for their commitment and accomplishments in their fields. I'm thrilled with these recognitions, among many others.

Something to look for as we enter this 3rd quarter of FY14, we will put quite an emphasis on the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Strategic Plan. The theme of this important initiative is **"Honoring Service, Empowering Health"**, and you will see many programs focused on these goals and strategies. Currently, we are familiarizing all staff with the plan, and how we will implement it to our Veterans and their families. You will begin to see everything from a rollout of new check-in kiosks on our first floor to make your arrival for appointments much smoother and more efficient, to the introduction of room service for both patients AND families in inpatient rooms!

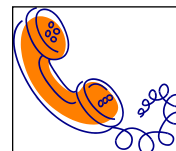
We have much to look forward to, and I hope you enjoy Spring. As always, Thank You for your service!

Dr. Pamela Reeves
Medical Center Director

How do I call the Detroit VA?

The Telephone Call Center here at the Detroit VAMC can assist with appointment management, prescription refills and medical questions or concerns.

Members of our call center staff are available Monday—Friday, 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m., 313-576-1051 or 800-511-8056.



Follow the Detroit VA Healthcare System on Facebook and Twitter!



Mark your Calendars! The VA2K returns to the Detroit VA!



**Wednesday, May 21,
2014,**

11:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

*More details
coming soon!*

Dr. Scott A. Gruber, Chief of Staff, Named President Elect of CSA

Scott A. Gruber, M.D., Ph.D., MBA, FACS, FCP, FACHE, CPE, Chief of Staff of the Detroit VA Healthcare System and Associate Dean for Veterans Affairs & Professor of Surgery at Wayne State University School of Medicine, was recently named President Elect of the Central Surgical Association (CSA) at its 71st Annual Meeting, held in Indianapolis, March 6 – 8, 2014.



Dr. Gruber will serve as the CSA's 73rd president, March 2015 through March 2016. He previously served as Treasurer, Program Committee Chair and Local Arrangements Chair of the organization. The CSA has a current membership of approximately 1,000 academic surgeons in the United States and Canada.

"We are very proud of Dr. Gruber and his accomplishments," said Dr. Pamela Reeves, Director of the Detroit VA Healthcare System. "Each day, as a surgeon and as a leader in this medical center, he is an outstanding advocate for the health and well-being of each and every Veteran we treat."

Prior to his appointment as Chief of Staff in October 2010, Dr. Gruber served as Professor of Surgery and Chief, Section of Transplant Surgery, Wayne State University School of Medicine and as Director of the Organ Transplant Program at Harper University Hospital since 2001.

During his tenure at the Detroit VA, Dr. Gruber has worked closely with facility and surgical leadership teams to significantly increase the number of general and orthopedic surgery cases performed; establish a gynecology center of excellence; launch a successful robotic surgery program; and obtain approval for a state-of-the-art hybrid endovascular suite in the operating room.

Detroit VA Healthcare System Awards First "Excellence Award"

New this year, the Detroit VA Healthcare System has rolled out a quarterly Excellence Award. Medical Center Director, Dr. Pamela Reeves, was thrilled to award the very first award to **Chris Hermann, NP-C**, in mid-March.

"Chris exemplifies Excellence in every way," said Dr. Reeves. "So many of us recognize his integrity, respect and commitment to our Veteran patients. He is a team player, while showing clear leadership and advocacy when it comes to both employees and patients."

Dr. Reeves introduced the award as a way to recognize and also inspire employees. "I think we can learn from each other when it comes to patient care and advocacy," said Dr. Reeves. "Chris shows enthusiasm, innovation, thoughtfulness and patience when it comes to caring for others."

Employees are responsible for submitting nominations for the Excellence Award program. A review committee has been appointed to look through nominations and select a quarterly winner. The Director will approve the final selection each quarter.



Pictured L to R: Medical Center Director, Dr. Pamela Reeves, Chris Hermann, NP-C, Karen Honeycomb, RN and Trudy Snyder

Detroit VA Employees Dress in RED to support February, American Heart Health Month!

During the month of February, Americans see the human heart as the symbol of love. February is American Heart Month, and on one particular day, VA employees are encouraged to wear red to show their support. Our medical center photographer, **Larry Marchionda**, decided to have a bit of fun and show all of us how committed our staff is to the health and wellness of our Veterans!



NEW VHIC Cards for Veterans

This new card may have already landed in your mailbox! The VA has begun to issue a newly redesigned, more secure Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) to replace the Veteran Identification Card (VIC). The VHIC replaces the less secure VIC which was implemented in 2004. VA recommends Veterans safeguard their VIC as they would a credit card, and cut up or shred the card once it is replaced.



Medical Center Victory Band is Music to the Ears of Many!



The idea for The Victory Band was formed out of a need for a particular type of therapy for Veterans who struggle with various mental illnesses.

"These were Veterans in our Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC)," said Dr. Michelle Abela, a psychologist at the Detroit VA Healthcare System. "In this unique program, we are focused on recovery and rehabilitation, not just treatment. We see everything from PTSD to severe depression and schizophrenia. Eighteen months ago, as staff was brainstorming ways we could help our patients, a Veteran in the program suggested that we start a band. We had been thinking about ways to incorporate music into our program and we knew that music can offer a number of benefits, so this seemed like a good concept."

The staff in the Mental Health Service knew they needed some musical insight. "That's when Matt Thomas, Steve Munafo and their Jam for Vets Project stepped in," said Dr. Abela. "Not only did they help provide the instruments and the music, but they offered to teach some of these great heroes how to play!"

There was not only a clinical aspect to the program, but Voluntary Service was heavily involved. "We heard about the idea to form the Victory Band, and knew we had to get



involved," said Steve Munafo. "The whole idea of helping Veterans cope with their illnesses through music was something I was confident in. I see the positive effects on these guys and it's so incredibly rewarding."

Dr. Abela says music can do incredible things for Veterans who are living with illnesses. It has a powerful influence and can help them with their coping skills, stress management, expressing feelings, leadership and team building, just to name a few. "We have seen some amazing changes in these Veterans. They are so enthusiastic when it comes to their twice-a-week rehearsals, along with the opportunity to perform in front of people. It's truly eye-opening."

"We couldn't have 'put the band together', as they say, without the help of Jam for Vets," said Bill Browning, Chief of Voluntary Service and Community Relations at the medical center. "We have a great partnership with this extraordinary organization. They hold performances often here at the medical center, for patients in all of our areas, including hospice and our outpatient clinics."

Daniel Beever, an Army Veteran from Mt. Clemens who served in Germany during Vietnam, made the suggestion to start the band. Beever plays keyboard. "I've made new friends and it's helped me out greatly. And, it makes me happy to entertain my fellow Vets."

The Victory Band performs here in the medical center, 1:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m. on the first Monday of each month in the Atrium.



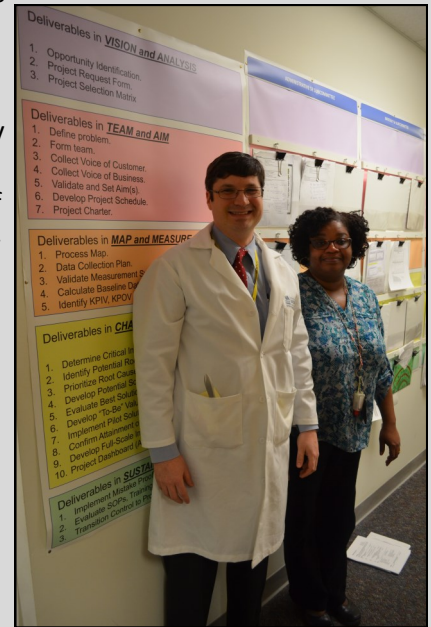
Patient Follow-Up—One Service’s Push for Improvement

Follow-up appointments with the patient are a vital part of ongoing patient safety, as all of our staff agrees. These appointments encourage specialists to review the status of their patients and ensure that patients with chronic conditions receive the appropriate secondary care input.

The Detroit VA Healthcare System neurology chief, Dr. Jeff Halladay championed a project to improve the important process of inpatient to outpatient follow-up appointments. The team was formed with all key staff members, including Catherine Ramsey, Medicine Discharge Nurse, Stephanie Brown, Supervisor of Outpatient Ward Administration, Cheryl Lang, NP and Clinic Coordinator, and Rocky Debose, Administrative Officer of the Acute Care Service.

The team visualized current process workflow, and highlighted all steps that provide value to our customers and steps that are not value-added. It was learned that in total, there were about 5—6 people involved in the workflow and about 5—25 or more steps to schedule one appointment for an patient.

Then the team brainstormed on how to eliminate non-valued added steps and keep high quality and safety care. The team is now piloting a changed program in which 3 people are involved in the process and only 4 steps are needed to complete one appointment.



Medical Center CWT Program Graduates Group of Dedicated Veterans

On February 26, 2014, the Detroit VA Healthcare System once again graduated Veterans from its Compensated Work Therapy Program.

The CWT program is a national initiative that focuses on maximizing vocational rehabilitation potential by addressing the complex rehabilitative issues of each Veteran within the program.

“We are so proud of all of you,” said Dr. Rebecca Roth, Chief of Psychology for the medical center, in a speech at the ceremony. “You have accomplished so much and will go so far after your time in this program.”

The CWT/TWE program participants are matched to a work assignment for a limited time as is clinically appropriate. The program functions as a ‘real’ job for all participants!

“The CWT program saved my life,” said Tommy Bradford, a 2013 graduate of the program. “They encouraged and helped me every single day with a kind word or a listening ear!”



Welcome Home 2014: A Hiring
Fair for Veterans
March 1, 2014
Detroit VA Healthcare System



National Salute Week Again Pays Tribute to Veterans!



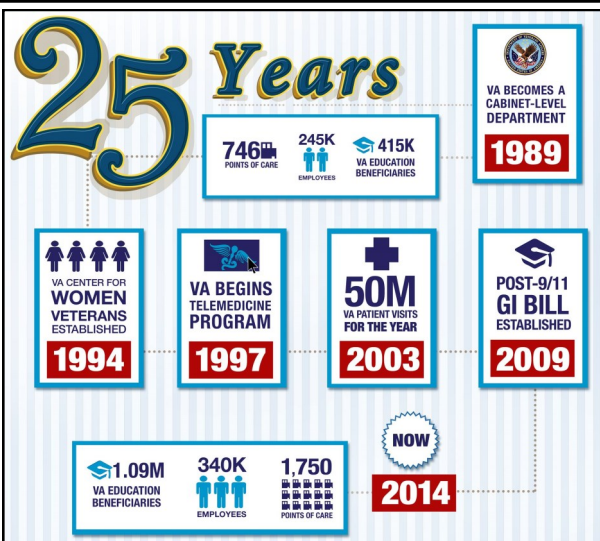
The National Salute to Veteran Patients Week, held February 9—15, 2014, was a great chance for Detroit VA Healthcare System employees to salute both patients and their families for their service. The medical center hosted visitors, media and volunteers for what was an exciting week, filled with lots of surprises!

"The National Salute to Veteran Patients gives our community a chance to thank those who have given so much to our nation," said Pamela Reeves, Detroit VA Healthcare System Director. "Each year, we invite elected officials, school groups, celebrities and others to visit our patients during the week."

"It's really our week to honor the more than 330,000 Veterans across Southeast Michigan," said William Browning, Chief of Volunteer and Community Relations. "This week has quite a bit of history to it. The annual VA National Salute program began in 1978. VA Voluntary Service staff plan and execute local events and activities at VA medical facilities around the nation, including right here at the Detroit VA Healthcare System. The National Salute is observed annually during the week of Valentine's Day, a day of caring and sharing which underscores the Salute's expression of honor and appreciation to inpatient and outpatient Veterans!"

While the National Salute kicks off in mid-February, Detroit-area residents have the chance to show their appreciation to Veterans all year by volunteering their time here at the medical center. No medical experience is necessary and volunteers are encouraged to share ideas on how they would like to give back using their unique skills. To find opportunities, you can call 313-576-3332 or go to www.detroit.va.gov/giving.

"Visitors are often surprised at how varied our volunteer opportunities are."



VA Celebrates 25 Years!

Facts you might not know about VA:

- ♦ VA still cares for the child of a Civil War Veteran, more than 100 children and spouses of Spanish-American War Veterans, and more than 4,000 children and spouses of World War I Veterans.
- ♦ Slightly over 11 million of the approximately 22 million Veterans in this country are registered, enrolled or use at least one VA benefit or service.
- ♦ VA pioneered electronic medical records.
- ♦ More than 4 million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict, are buried in VA's cemeteries.



Service Profile: Systems Redesign

By: Webster Francois, Student Trainee, Systems Redesign

Program Mission

Systems Redesign is responsible for helping to identify improvement opportunities in all departments within our medical center. Once identified, we help guide these projects to success by facilitating implementation and sustainability while ensuring successful outcomes. Through the Systems Redesign steering and subcommittee reporting process and, with our staff, we assist other departments by creating workable tools that can assist people in efficiency of their work.

What Do We Do?

Systems Redesign is a set of tools and approaches to health care quality improvement. It examines interactions among health care system components and their impact on quality of care and costs. It incorporates many of the strategies of Lean, an approach to quality improvement first developed by the Japanese automotive manufacturing industry. It focuses on reducing waste and variability. Systems Redesign at the Detroit VA Healthcare System began as a one person crew in 2008 and has grown to more than twenty employees in 2014.

Services Available

We routinely work with several departments throughout the hospital to help facilitate their process improvement. Any Department can request our assistance and services. Our project forms can be found at http://vaww.detroit.med.va.gov/services/SystemsRedesign/jddvamc_sysRed_aim.htm. The Systems Redesign Steering Committee will thoroughly review the project. They will also recommend the type of project necessary to reach improvement goals that will include a suggested time frame. We are located on the third floor of the Yellow Building. We can also be reached at (313) 576-1000 ext. 64920.

The DVAMS

DVAMS is the Systems Redesign organizational framework developed by the VA Office of Systems Redesign to improve the care provided to Veterans at VA facilities nationwide. DVAMS is easy to understand and implement. Once an area for improvement has been identified and leadership support has been established, the improvement team can use the DVAMS framework for any quality improvement initiative, whether long-term or short-term, large-scale or small-scale. While no framework for improvement is perfect, we do know that adopting and using a consistent framework to organize the improvement process will clarify and facilitate the team's work.



7 Detroit VA Healthcare System Physicians Named “Best Doctors”

CONGRATULATIONS to the Detroit VA Healthcare System physicians who were named to the 2014 Best Doctors list.

- Dr. Edwin George, Neurology, Movement Disorders
- Dr. Joseph Fontana, Oncology and Hematology, Breast Cancer
- Dr. M. Safwan Badr, Critical Care Medicine, Pulmonary Medicine and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and Sleep Medicine
- Dr. Bret Hughes, Ophthalmology, Glaucoma
- Dr. Noreen Rossi, Nephrology, General Nephrology
- Dr. Darius Mehregan, Dermatology, General Dermatology
- Dr. Ho-Sheng Lin, Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery, Oncological Surgery

For more on the Best Doctors list, visit <http://www.bestdoctors.com/>.



The Detroit VA Healthcare System: Paving a Pathway of Success for Students

By: Shadia Manns, Student Trainee, Systems Redesign/Quality and Performance

From being one of the most well-known Medical Centers in the VA system, to providing more than 100 services for Detroit-area Veterans who have fought hard to serve our country, the Detroit VA has also expanded in many other ways. One of the biggest initiatives is the cultivation of students to gain an opportunity to learn through various internship opportunities.

Some of the many Internship opportunities the VA has made available for students, is the Graduate Healthcare Administration Training Program, or the Pathways Internship Program. Within the Pathways Internship Program, students of 4-year colleges and universities as well as high schools are able to receive hands on experience in a wide variety of services within the VA while being compensated for their efforts. These opportunities allow for the student to gain not only administrative experience but also background within their field of study. One of the many departments which adopts these students and allows for them to receive hands on education and training, is the Quality Management and Systems Redesign Department.

In Systems Redesign, students are given the opportunity to use teamwork and collaborative skills to solve complex clinical work flow problems in an effort to improve employee efficiency and patient satisfaction. This is just one of many great opportunities that the Detroit VA provides for its students.

Nationally, to date, there are 317 Pathways students who have participated in this important program, and with the support and guidance of the VA, these students including myself, have the ability to broaden our horizons and develop successful career paths.



INSTANCES OF EXCELLENCE

***Look for more comments from our Veterans in the Instances of Excellence Newsletter, now published quarterly.*

"As a new client in the Domiciliary, Ms. Cass went above and beyond the call of duty by going into the community to gather clothing for my interview."

"Charmaine takes time with Veterans, very calm, upbeat and friendly. Great voice and personality, very warm and extremely helpful!"

"Kathy is a dedicated team player. No matter the request, she is always willing to help when the goal is focused on the patient's needs."

"My colleague and I needed assistance with getting Veterans registered for a healthier living workshop. Tramaine offered her assistance without hesitation to ensure that Veterans were registered. She collaborated with us to overcome barriers. She displayed consistent professionalism and went over and beyond the call of duty."

Veteran Networking Fair Connects Vets with Community Partners

Community partnerships help Detroit VA Healthcare System staff with all aspects of care we provide to our Veterans. And, leadership continues to improve and enhance these connections and to make sure Veterans have access.

After holding a successful summertime Mental Health Summit, the Detroit VA Healthcare System again brought together those in the community who serve Veterans.

On January 29, 2014, the medical center held its first-ever Veterans Networking Fair, designed to share information regarding services available to Veterans at both the VA and within the community.



"We learned so much from our August 2013 Mental Health Summit," said Dr. Pamela Reeves, Medical Center Director. "We, along with many in the community, realized that in many cases when it comes to treating Veterans, particularly in Mental Health, we need to work as a team within our community. So often we simply don't know what services are available outside of the VA, and I think other agencies feel the same way. This event will help curb that."

Community providers set up booths to both network with colleagues and provide information to Veterans. More than 45 agencies and providers attended.

Detroit VA Healthcare System Receives Accreditation by COMISS, Commission for Accreditation of Pastoral Services

More than 10 years ago, the Detroit VA Healthcare System was the very first to receive national accreditation for its Chaplain Service.

Again, we are thrilled to have received our re-accreditation from COMISS. The commission commented that it was quite impressed by the "remarkable breadth and depth of the understanding of the pastoral services program throughout the facility and the remarkable strength and dedication to spiritual care at the medical center."



We Asked... You Answered... VA Changed to Better Meet Your Needs

A New and Improved VA Prescription Label

We have changed the format of your VA prescription label to make the most important information more visible. If you have any questions about your medications, please contact your local VA pharmacist at any time.

The New Prescription Label

Important information is now highlighted.

Your name has been moved to the top of the label.

Directions on how to take your medication are now larger and bolder.

VETERAN NAME (LAST, FIRST)

**TAKE 1 TABLET BY MOUTH
TWICE A DAY**

IBUPROFEN 400 MG TAB

Rx# 6543210 Refills Left: 1 (of 3)

DR. KATHLEEN LANCASTER Qty: 60 TAB

VAMC FACILITY NAME
000XX (10297/10001) Ph: (800) 000-0000

Discard after: 01/15/2013

Avoid alcoholic beverages.
May cause dizziness.
Do not take other medicines without checking with your doctor or pharmacist.

54 733 Round White 54 733

The date the prescription can no longer be refilled is clearly stated.

You will see this change coming in March of 2014

Detroit VA Healthcare System, Pharmacy Service

